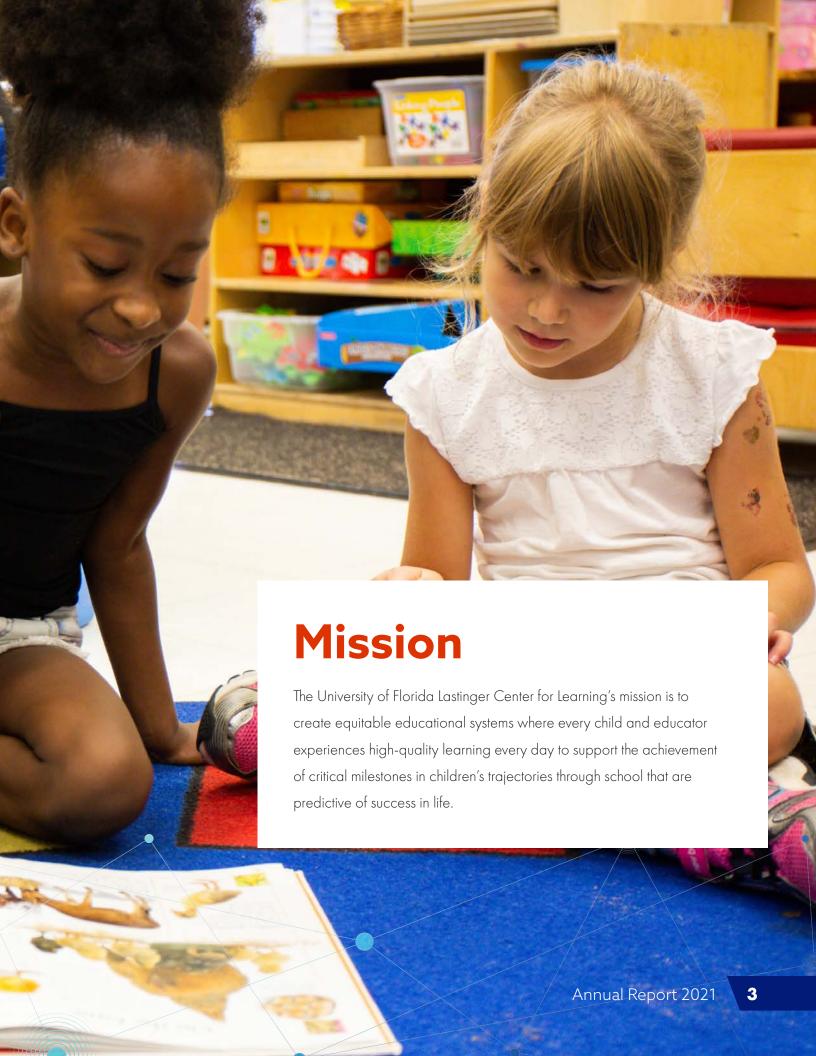


# **Contents**

MISSION	3
DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE	5
2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS	6
PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS	8
2022 INITIATIVES	22
ABOUT US	24
OUR REACH	25









# Director's Message

The past year has been extraordinary in every sense. The continuation of a global pandemic. Disruptions to schooling, the workforce, and supply chains. In the midst of all this, the Lastinger Center experienced unprecedented growth in our work and team.

The Center recently surpassed the 100-associate mark, having increased our team by over 30% to manage the new responsibilities and opportunities the Center embraced over the year. This includes the New Worlds Reading Initiative, the largest home book delivery program in the country, as well as bold new projects in our early learning, literacy, mathematics, and learning sciences work. 2021 was the biggest year in the Center's history by any metric, and the coming year is on track to eclipse that mark again.

As we transition to 2022, the year when we celebrate our 20th year of operations, the Center is now operating at a higher level of reach and impact. We are making the necessary adjustments to continue to adapt our work to embrace this new scale and have embarked on a strategic planning process that will outline the Center's vision for 2025. We aim to evolve our strategy and operations to accomplish our goals of increasing impact on teaching and learning, scaling our supports to more students and teachers, and creating sustainable solutions that can achieve long-term impact.

We aim to do all this while maintaining an organizational culture centered on principled pragmatism and the core elements of our work that have made us successful as an organization. These elements include our equity-focused mission for all students and teachers to have high-quality learning experiences and our inquiry-driven approach to responsive innovation that elevates the voices of students and teachers in prioritizing the challenges we must address.



The year ahead will be an inflection point, an opportunity to look back over our 20-year history to embrace the foundations and traditions on which this organization is built and celebrate the inspired individuals who built it. It is also a year to look ahead to the future that the Center is currently building, when we embrace our new position as a significant player in education innovation and improvement not just in Florida, but nationally and internationally. This year will be a time when we deepen and expand our strategic partnerships to further grow the impact and scale of our work. This year will be a time when we level up as an organization.

I am honored and humbled to lead the Center into this next chapter. I am surrounded by an incredible team of visionaries, leaders, and doers who joined the Center to make a difference. Together, we aim to leave the education systems we touch in better shape than how we found them. We aim to change the lifelong trajectories of students who pass through those systems. Our success in these efforts contribute to the just and equitable society that we dream of for our state, our country, and our world. Please join us for the next 20 years and beyond.

Phil Poekert, Ph.D.

Director

# 2021 Accomplishments

To fully meet the needs of all learners, the Lastinger Center has expanded our programs to support teachers, directors, principals, administrators, and families across the early childhood and K-12 systems. Our technology-enhanced innovations now support more than 50,000 teachers and 1 million students across 26 states each year.



### TEACHER SUPPORTS

"We cannot overstate the profound impact teaching a child to read will have on their future success. The power of getting a new book and getting a child excited about reading...is the reason the Florida House came up with the New Worlds Reading Initiative. Not only do we open them up to new worlds and ideas, we give them the tools to expand their imagination, foster their curiosity and ultimately chart their own destiny."

#### SPEAKER CHRIS SPROWLS



#### Noteworthy programmatic accomplishments of 2021 include:

- → Being named lead administrator of the New Worlds Reading Initiative, a \$177M literacy engagement program created by the Florida Legislature to support an estimated 500,000 K-5 students not yet reading at grade level in Florida
- → Hiring Dr. Zandra de Araujo as Chief Equity Officer and Mathematics Principal to support the Center in living out its mission to build more equitable and just educational systems
- Strengthening our internal equity work, including the continuation of Center Equity Groups and addition of Equity Onboarding Sessions for new staff
- Continuing our partnership with the Vinik Family Foundation to implement phase two of the Hillsborough Early Learning Network in the Tampa Bay, Florida region
- Launching a fully online Flamingo Early Learning Coaching Certification program to expand access to participants
- → Partnering with Pinellas County Schools to build research-based literacy professional development systems for teachers, coaches, and administrators
- Building and launching a K-12 literacy coaching certification for the Florida Department of Education
- → Expanding our Literacy Matrix online professional development program to Alaska and New Jersey
- Developing and piloting the initial modules for the Math Matrix online professional development system with funding from Microsoft



# Program Accomplishments



## **EARLY LEARNING**

High-quality early learning experiences have an extraordinarily positive impact on a child's cognitive, social, and physical development. When children have access to quality care, they are more likely to be ready for kindergarten and future school and career success. Flamingo Early Learning offers online and in-person professional development for numerous stakeholders across the early childhood education system. Over the past year, we launched new professional learning content, including our online Coaching Certification program, to further our reach to teachers, leaders, coaches, and administrators in early learning settings.

#### FLAMINGO EARLY LEARNING COURSES

In response to the real-time needs of the educators we serve, we created and launched two additional leadership courses in Spanish, increasing the total number of online courses to 47. Through our partnership with the Florida Division of Early Learning, 5,937 educators across Florida enrolled in Flamingo Early Learning courses in 2021. Since 2015, we have delivered 600,000 hours of content through 29,000 courses.

In an effort to analyze and share the impact of our courses on Florida's early childhood education system, the Lastinger Center published a *Flamingo Early Learning Florida Impact Report*. From 2016-2020, 18,561 early childhood educators from 66 of Florida's 67 counties completed courses, with a completion rate of 74%. There was significant evidence of course growth (50%) as measured by pre- and post-assessments.



47

Online Courses

5,937

educators across Florida enrolled in Flamingo Early Learning courses in 2021

#### FLAMINGO EARLY LEARNING ONLINE COACHING CERTIFICATION

Although the Lastinger Center has offered early learning coaching certification since 2015, this past year saw the first cohort of participants complete our new, fully online Flamingo Early Learning Coaching Certification program. This program was developed in response to the need to remove time and travel barriers that previously existed in only offering in-person certification. Our first certified coach in the new online program was also the first certified coach from Florida's panhandle, a region that has previously experienced barriers to access due to location.

"I just wanted to let you know that I thoroughly enjoyed taking this course!! I went into it thinking 'I have been teaching for 29 years, what can I learn?' I was so very wrong in thinking that!! I learned so many new things and I will be using them in my classroom. Thank you so much for the opportunity!!!"

#### SHARI

Early Learning Teacher

"I learned so much from the online coaching program from UF. I was happy when the course became available virtually because it gave me an opportunity to participate. I have been in the childcare field for 30 years and still, I learned a new perspective about coaching. Through this course, I learned that it is really about the journey that the teacher goes through to better their own personal practice. You are there to support, guide, and ask probing questions to help the teacher reflect on their own practices in order to meet their personal goals. This method of coaching helps the teacher refine what feels natural and authentic to them while honing their skills in the classroom using data."

#### MICHELLE MOCK

First Online Certified Coach, 2021

#### HILLSBOROUGH EARLY LEARNING NETWORK

The Vinik Family Foundation has continued its investment in supporting the refining, evaluation, and scaling of the Hillsborough Early Learning Network, an early childhood professional development system that transforms teacher practice, program quality, and child outcomes in Hillsborough County. This additional \$3M gift, paired with Hillsborough County's spirit of innovation, allows us to harness our success and learnings from the first three years of the project to further enhance the model. In partnership with the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County, we're taking what we've learned from the community and educators' needs and wants, and are building our technologies, tools, and content needed to shape an integrated and sustainable system of professional development that will improve child level outcomes.

"Between the relationships I create in my workplace, the mentors and instructors in HELN, and the community of practice that I have come to know and network with, I have learned the power of community. I have learned that part of being a good leader/director is embracing your team and realizing what strengths and gifts others bring to the table. This maximizes your center's potential and creates a stronger unit that ultimately has positive outcomes for the children in our care and offers them a rich learning experience. Thank you, HELN, for the experience of a lifetime."

#### MARILYN

Program Leader



During the first three-year period of the initiative, HELN:

- Supported 814 teachers and indirectly impacted more than
   8,000 children
- Improved educator content knowledge by an average of 30%
- Reduced program participation attrition by 50%
- Engaged key stakeholders to begin aligning professional learning supports to create a cohesive system

## NATIONAL EXPANSION

#### MASSACHUSETTS STRONG START INITIATIVE

Our partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care department continues as we serve as an Early Childhood Support Organization for the Strong Start Initiative. In 2021, 41 program leaders from 19 early childhood programs engaged in our leadership development program, impacting 150 teachers they support. Program leaders have seen a shift in teacher engagement as they utilize the tools they have received through the leadership courses and communities of practice. In the upcoming year, ten more programs will join the project and current program leaders will participate in the Flamingo Early Learning Coaching Certification program.

# GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CARE AND LEARNING

In 2021, the Lastinger Center renewed its partnership with Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) to offer professional services focused on strategic planning, leadership, coaching, and communities of practice support. Using a multi-layered approach, UF-trained facilitators are collaborating with GA DECAL professionals who provide support to the early care workforce through relationship-based strategies.

"I would like to say what a great experience this has been. I have learned so many new techniques, strategies, "protocols" and opening and closing moves. I think the two greatest impacts have been the incredible change in our staff meetings and taking a look at the culture and the future culture of the center. The staff meetings are relevant, discussion-based, learning-based and the educators really appreciate the effort to make each meeting worth their time."

MA PROGRAM LEADER 2021

"The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light just how essential and important our early childhood education workforce is to our communities and country. Even as they faced innumerable challenges, the teachers, directors, and administrators with which we partner have shown incredible resilience and an ongoing commitment to improving their practice to advance child learning outcomes. We are thrilled to be able to further support the field through our new, online programs and the continuation of our community-based projects."

#### LISA SUTTER

Interim Assistant Director of Strategy

## LITERACY

Reading is an adventure, a thrill, and a basic human right that has the ability to transform lives in incredible ways. We envision a world where all children have access to supports and educational practices that are proven to help them learn and love to read. However, we know a majority of children in America are unable to read proficiently. In response, we have expanded our Flamingo Literacy professional development system to equip teachers and leaders with the skills to implement effective, research-based instruction in classrooms.



#### FLAMINGO LITERACY MATRIX

Our literacy-focused, online professional development system trains K-5 teachers to implement evidence-based reading instruction with even the most struggling readers. In 2021, we expanded the reach of the Literacy Matrix, serving nearly 4,000 teachers, coaches and educational leaders in Florida, New Hampshire and Alaska. The Literacy Matrix has a significant impact on teachers' knowledge of evidence-based reading instruction, with knowledge growth being equivalent to having a personal tutor.

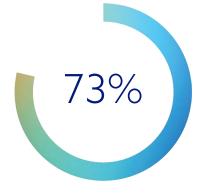


Content mastery rates improved from less than 10% at pre-assessment to nearly
 100% at post-assessment

"Participating in the Literacy Matrix professional development has grown my skill set as a teacher, especially in the areas of intervention for struggling readers. Through the Matrix, I learned skills to provide early intervention in a systematic, research-based way, instead of just making my best professional 'guess' at what areas the student was struggling in. I have been teaching for 10 years and through this Matrix...I have learned more about reading instruction and intervention than ever before."



Teacher, Alachua County, Florida



Across all strands, participants increased their knowledge by 73%



Content mastery rates improved from less than 10% at pre-assessment to nearly 100% at post-assessment



#### LITERACY MATRIX EXPANSION TO PRE-KINDERGARTEN

We know that literacy doesn't begin in kindergarten - young children's early language development significantly impacts their future reading achievement. To ensure that pre-kindergarten educators have the knowledge and skills to support language and literacy development, we are developing preschool Literacy Matrix modules. These online courses tailored for preschool teachers will be available by the end of the year.

"The idea of collecting data and sharing that when coaching to discuss equity and being critically conscious was the most helpful."

#### LITERACY COACH

#### FLORIDA READING COACHING ENDORSEMENT

To realize the vision of the Florida Department of Education's CARES Act Plan for upskilling highly effective reading coaches, the Lastinger Center is developing an online literacy coach endorsement. Through this training, coaches gain advanced knowledge of highly effective literacy instruction, aligned with Florida's B.E.S.T. Standards, and evidence-based coaching strategies to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills, ultimately improving literacy outcomes for students. Participants earn their Literacy Coach Endorsement upon successful completion of the program.



"Reading holds the key and opens the door to knowledge in every other field. However, reading is a complex task and requires a comprehensive system of supports for all children to learn to proficiently read. We have expanded our Flamingo Literacy system to provide competency-based professional learning programs to teachers, coaches, and administrators through diverse modalities to ensure equitable access. Our participants benefit from an individualized learning experience supported by expert facilitators that lead to real impact: 98% of educators demonstrate mastery upon completion and students' reading growth is accelerated when their teachers engage in our programs."

#### DR. PAIGE PULLEN

Chief Academic Officer and Literacy Principal



Kt-2t-3k=6 +3k = 6 + 3k(K-2) = 6+-3)=2(t+1)astinger Center for Learning

## **MATHEMATICS**

Research shows that students with a strong understanding of mathematics have more opportunities to pursue higher education and a variety of jobs, particularly those in STEM fields. To foster mathematics competency, we are building a new, online professional development system to invest in our most powerful catalyst for change: educators. The initial Math Matrix modules were piloted with secondary math educators in 2021 with promising preliminary results. In addition, our Math Nation teaching and learning system saw unprecedented growth in usage as schools faced significant closures and teacher turnover. To further accelerate student learning, we have begun to build data infrastructures to integrate the two platforms through support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

#### THE MATH MATRIX

In partnership with Microsoft, the Lastinger Center is building the Math Matrix, an online professional development system for middle and secondary math educators. This competency-based program is designed to build content and instructional knowledge of foundational math concepts. Educators will have the opportunity to apply these strategies and submit practicum activities as evidence of their learning for personalized review and feedback.



Our initial pilot was conducted in summer 2021 and yielded exciting results, including:

- 90% of teachers who completed the Foundations module earned at least an 80% on the post-assessment.
- → 67% of participants who completed the Instruction module earned at least an 80% on the post-assessment



90% of teachers who completed the Foundations module earned at least an 80% on the post-assessment.



67% of participants who completed the Instruction module earned at least an 80% on the post-assessment

#### MATH NATION

Math Nation, our dynamic, online mathematics program, has seen accelerated expansion across the U.S. in response to COVID-19.

Nearly 1,000,000 students across 26 states logged into the platform in 2021, with 30,000 teachers also utilizing Math Nation for instruction. Math Nation is used as a supplemental or stand-alone curriculum for students enrolled in middle grades mathematics courses, Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2.

"I have never found a better standards-aligned, comprehensive, and reliable resource as Algebra Nation and Math Nation. The developers understood the need, collaborated with teachers and have done a great job creating a quality, engaging, multi-level resource."

FLORIDA DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

26

States

950,000

Students

21M

Logins

29M

**Tutorials Viewed** 

25M

Questions Answered

#### **GATES BALANCE THE EQUATION PROJECT**

In 2021, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation selected the Lastinger Center as a Balance the Equation Grand Challenge Grantee. With this grant, the team is building a math curriculum designed to promote student engagement, academic success, and the development of positive math learner identities among Black and Latinx students. Culturally Relevant Math Nation is an online math program that enhances the Illustrative Mathematics (IM) Algebra 1 curriculum, using the Math Nation platform as the vehicle to deliver culturally aligned algebra content, a social networking wall where students will explore their identities as learners, and a space for students to set and track their mathematics learning and performance goals. This content allows students to see themselves reflected in Mathematics, facilitating the growth of their identity as competent mathematicians. It also supports teacher efficacy incorporating culturally responsive content in the classroom.

"Dramatically improving student achievement in mathematics cannot occur without first addressing the vast disparities in educational opportunities for our most marginalized students. Centering equity in mathematics education means ensuring that teachers are adequately prepared and supported to effectively teach all students in ways that foster a deep understanding and appreciation of the subject. It also means ensuring that all students have access to appropriate and relevant instructional supports they need to experience success. We are working to advance educational equity in mathematics through our new Math Matrix professional development program and by enhancing our Math Nation curricula. We have only just begun and are excited to continue on our own equity journey to transform education systems in Florida and beyond."

#### DR. ZANDRA DE ARAUJO

Chief Equity Officer and Mathematics Principal

## **DIGITAL INNOVATIONS**

As the education field continues to face significant challenges, the Lastinger Center has doubled down on its commitment to ensuring educators' voices are prioritized in our product development and delivery. We have continued to enhance our Flamingo Learning online professional development platform to offer a better user experience for the more than 40,000 educators who have engaged in the system. In 2021, Flamingo Learning was augmented with a robust communications center to support communities of practice, a personalized recommendation system for a streamlined learning experience, and enhanced reporting to inform instruction, research, and development. Data tracking efforts have also begun to systematically collect and analyze user information and feedback to inform our team on successes and challenges of our products and platforms.



#### GATES FOUNDATION FLAMINGO NATION DATA LAGOON

Over the years, the Flamingo Learning databases have collected rich achievements and activity data spanning early learning, literacy, and mathematics. There is an incredible opportunity to integrate these data to inform timely data-driven decisions and further research, development, and evaluation for educators, administrators, and researchers. By joining professional learning data with student learning data, latent potential exists for longitudinal, comprehensive research on student learning patterns as they progress from early childhood through high school. Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, we are initially integrating data from the Math Nation online platform and Flamingo Learning online professional development platform, where our flagship programs like Literacy Matrix and Math Matrix systems are housed, to form the Flamingo Nation Data Lagoon. The increased power of having all data together unlocks the innate dependency of reading/literacy and math achievement. With this longitudinal data, we will be able to explore learning patterns that contribute to successful, timely achievement of major learning milestones and identify strategies to bolster achievement for others throughout their educational careers.

"Online learning platforms have become essential connective tissue in our education systems for students, teachers, leaders, and other support staff. As a result, there is incredible untapped potential in leveraging the vast data sets that have emerged from virtual education. The Lastinger Center continues to pioneer in educational technology by building infrastructures to connect our own learning platforms into a robust, data-driven system of real-time, tailored supports for educators as they rapidly respond and adapt to the instructional and social needs of their diverse learners."

#### DR. CATHY CAVANAUGH

Chief Experience Officer



### **NEW WORLDS READING INITIATIVE**

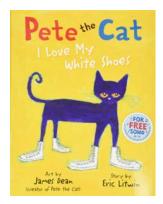
Every child deserves the opportunity to experience new worlds and achieve their full potential. Books offer infinite possibilities to discover and explore while building the life-changing skill of reading. Recognizing the importance of early literacy proficiency, the Florida legislature established the New Worlds Reading Initiative in 2021 to support an estimated 500,000 students not yet reading on grade level.



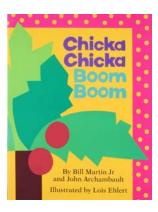
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA LASTINGER CENTER & SCHOLASTIC The Lastinger Center was selected as the lead administrator of the new statewide literacy program designed to encourage a love of reading and literacy engagement. The New Worlds Reading Initiative provides free monthly book delivery to eligible and enrolled K-5 public and charter school students. Students choose areas of interest as well as preferred language (English, Spanish, or Haitian Creole). In December, the first month of book delivery, more than 70,000 books were delivered to enrolled students.

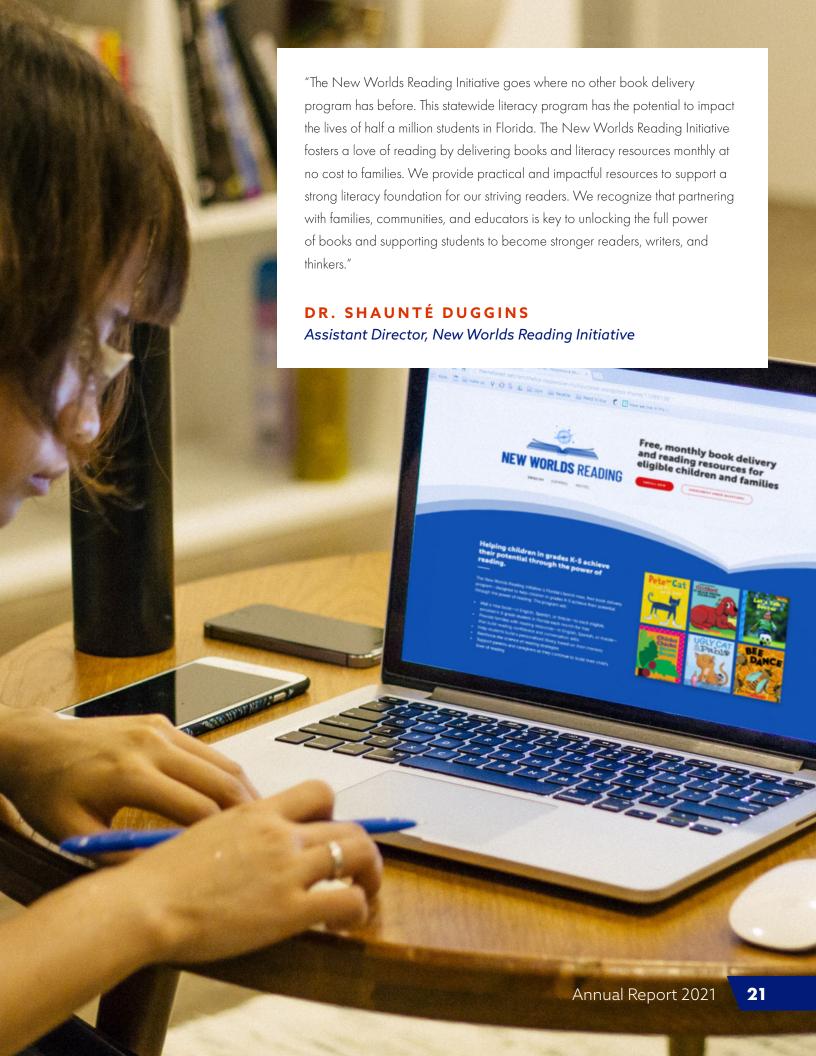
Recognizing that books alone won't eradicate illiteracy, the initiative engages school districts and community organizations to promote reading and build families' capacities to improve children's reading abilities. Families receive engaging literacy resources, activities, and guides to encourage shared reading experiences and strengthen language interactions. This program is completely free for families to join, and, once enrolled, students will remain eligible for the program until they enter sixth grade or unenroll. We estimate that over 550,000 students are eligible, amounting to up to 5 million books delivered per year.

To ensure the sustainability of the initiative, the UF Lastinger Center is a registered Scholarship Funding Organization (SFO), eligible to accept tax credit contributions to support the initiative. Under the New Worlds Reading Initiative, corporate taxpayers can make monetary contributions to the Lastinger Center and receive a dollar-for-dollar credit against select Florida taxes.









# 2022 Initiatives

Looking ahead, we continue to expand our research, product development, and innovations so every child and educator has access to high-quality learning experiences. This year is the start of a new strategic planning process that will help to refine our Vision for 2025.

Additionally, we are investing in further enhancements to our Flamingo Learning platform that will improve user engagement and experience and promote market expansion, including:

- → Artificial Intelligence integration using personalization and recommendation algorithms
- Data infrastructure build-out to closely monitor critical usage and engagement metrics

We are taking a renewed focus on building and delivering impactful products and services for students and educators across early learning and K-12 schools. We are committed to:

- Reviewing, enhancing, and expanding current products with an equity lens to ensure we are effectively meeting teachers' and students' needs with culturally diverse and relevant content
- > Prioritizing additional Spanish early learning course development to further support a significant portion of educators
- Expanding articulation pathways across product lines to enable educators to advance their education and careers by earning meaningful credentials through our offerings

We are also deploying the Flamingo Reading App to support teachers and students in classroom and distance learning. The App enables small group reading instruction in a virtual setting. It also:

- > Empowers teachers to bundle multiple steps into a single lesson and incorporate the components of the science of reading
- → Includes more than 900 app-accessible books for Small Group Instruction also available in Spanish

Further, we are expanding our professional development offerings to support secondary mathematics teachers by:

- Building the first strand of the Math Matrix, a comprehensive online mathematics professional development system designed to develop educator content and instructional knowledge so that they can effectively instruct and support all students, particularly our most underserved populations
- Piloting the Math Matrix to collect critical data on teacher engagement and knowledge attainment to inform additional development

2022 will surely prove to be a year of big, bold undertakings. The Center proudly stands at the cutting edge of educational innovation efforts.



# About Us

#### LASTINGER CENTER PORTFOLIO



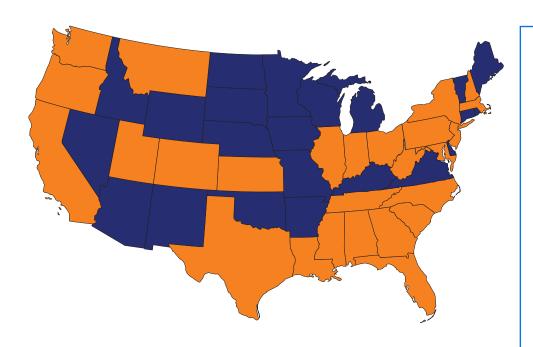
University of Florida alumni Allen and Delores Lastinger envisioned a center where high-impact education innovations would be developed and implemented by strategically integrating research with frontline educator experience. Out of their vision was born the Lastinger Center for Learning. Established in 2002 and housed within the College of Education, the Lastinger Center has spent the past two decades building and implementing innovative programs and systems that impact critical educational milestones: kindergarten readiness, third-grade reading proficiency, and algebra proficiency by ninth grade.

Over the past twenty years, we have supported hundreds of thousands of educators and millions of students across the country through our early learning, literacy, and mathematics programs. The remarkable scope and impact of our work have drawn state, national, and international recognition and investment.

#### Our programs and services are:

- Competency-based, leading to the demonstration of new knowledge and skills
- Technology-enhanced, including personalized and adaptive learning opportunities
- Research-informed and validated, shaping the ongoing design and implementation of solutions
- Rooted in public-private partnerships, leveraging catalytic philanthropic investments toward sustainable public support

### **OUR REACH**



Alabama North Carolina

California New Hampshire

Colorado New Jersey
Georgia New York

Illinois Ohio Indiana Oregon

Kansas Pennsylvania Louisiana South Carolina

Massachusetts Tennessee
Maryland Texas
Florida Utah

Montana Washington
Mississippi West Virginia

\$330M+

Public and private funding raised

1,000,000

Children reached each year

50,000

Educators served annually

26

States are benefiting from at least one Lastinger innovation







# **UF** Lastinger Center for Learning UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

# lastingercenter.com

#### **ADDRESS**

618 SW 12th Street 0711 Norman Hall PO Box 117052 Gainesville, FL 32611

#### PHONE

(352) 273-4103

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

